



SCOTT SHANLEY, GENERAL MANAGER

# Town of Manchester

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
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JAMES O. BERRY, CHIEF

March 7, 2008

House Speaker Amman and Representative Mike Lawler;  
Co-chairs, Judicial Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06104

Testimony: Raised HB 5836  
An Act Concerning Staffing at Domestic Violence Shelters

I, James O. Berry, am the present Police Chief of the Town of Manchester and I have nearly thirty years of law enforcement experience. This experience has allowed me to witness firsthand, the effectiveness of domestic violence services for families in crisis.

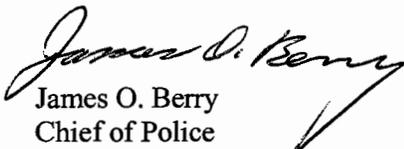
The services that domestic violence programs offer to families have been instrumental in the prevention and intervention, and also the reduction, in violent crimes relevant to domestic violence.

Arresting the batterer provides the victim with immediate safety, but not necessarily long term safety. The ability to refer victims to DV shelters and hotlines creates an important window of opportunity. The victim is provided with access to information about options and services that may help her get away and stay safe. By collaborating with local domestic violence programs, law enforcement can help enhance victim safety. However, we respond to domestic violence calls day in and day out...24-7. Domestic violence programs are an essential partner in our response to domestic violence and need to be readily available 24-7. An important component of law enforcement response to DV is the ability to provide victims with immediate access to domestic violence shelters and hotlines. Even if a woman chooses not to go into a shelter, immediate access to domestic violence staff via the hotline can be the key that helps victims begin to trust persons on the outside and may lead to future decisions that positively impact safety.

Manchester Police Department takes domestic violence seriously. We have a specialized unit called the Domestic Violence Outreach Team. It is a partnership program with Interval House, our local domestic violence intervention and prevention program. Our officers know they can contact Interval House at any time of the day or night and an on-site advocate will respond. Every police department should have that same service available in their community. Every victim of domestic violence should be able to just pick up the phone and be greeted by a trained advocate.

I strongly support HM 5836 that would maintain and enhance 24 hour supportive services to families and victims of domestic violence.

Sincerely,

  
James O. Berry  
Chief of Police

INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

